

THE
CHURCH
OF
ENGLAND
Free from the
IMPUTATION
OF
POPERY.

By
George Hooper

L O N D O N,

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THE
CHURCH

ENGLAND

from the

REFORMATION

OF
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Church of England

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THE Case between the Church of *England* and the Dissenters from it, requiring not much of Learning *The Imputation.* or Speculation; it might well seem to be no difficult matter to see into the bottom of it, and clear the difference. And indeed the Duty of Obedience in things indifferent, and the obligation of each Christian to preserve the Unity of the Church are so convincing, and the Expedience of some Ceremonies in general, and the Innocence of ours in particular so plain; that the Reconciliation of our Brethren to us, upon the view of our Reasons, and the Answers we have given to their Scruples, might be easily expected; were there not some General Prejudice upon the minds of otherwise well-disposed men, that like an interposing mist, either diverts the light that would otherwise come in, or lets it not appear in its own colour.

And this seems to be no other than the Opinion many men have been possess with, that our Worship is Popery; and that

that to return to our Communion is to make a step towards *Rome*, to joyu company with those that are going thither. For this conceit once entertain'd, a Minister of the Church of *England* is a disguised *Emissary* of the *Romish* Church; and all the Arguments and Perswasions he offers for Conformity, are receiv'd no better, than if he was endeavouring to pervert to the Papal Superstition. If we speak to them of the Common Prayer, they think of the *Mass*; and while we discourse to them of the fitness and lawfulness of kneeling at the Communion, they imagine nothing else but the Worship of the Host, and the Doctrine of Transubstantiation.

By whose Malice and Artifice soever this Prejudice has been rais'd and cherish'd; they, we must confess, have gain'd their point by it. They have stop't the Ears, and blinded the Eyes of those that otherwise would know the voice of their Brethren. The Aversion of the people deservedly raised against Popery, they have had the skill to turn against the greatest and best Church of the Reformation: And they have had the pleasure to put her under the most sensible affliction of lying under an imputation she so much abhors, and hearing her self reckon'd amongst those she has so openly and so justly condemn'd.

None can be ignorant how far this Prejudice has prevail'd, and with what success; tho' indeed it is a conceit so unlikely and inconsistent, that we might well expect no rational person should have entertain'd it: And did not Popery let us know what gross absurdities may find credit with the ignorant, it would be very hard to imagine how any belief should be given to such an impossibility. Transubstantiation it self being as conceivable a thing, as that a Protestant, really of our Church, should be a Papist too; and any other contradiction as easily reconcil'd as that.

Neither can they fairly object Ignorance and an Implicite Belief to the Papists, who know so little the constitution of the Protestant Religion, as not to see it in our Church; and
who

who resign themselves to their Teachers so far, as with the same credulity to call our Church Popish, with which the Papists are taught to call it Heretical.

So Causeless, I hope, and Groundless will this mischievous Calumny appear to all those that shall consider; and all those who will be willing to consider, that do not wilfully chuse a mistake so scandalously unjust to a great Reform'd Church, and so destructive and ruinous to the whole Reformation. As therefore they would not be found ignorant of the Religion they profess; as they would not continue so highly uncharitable to their Brethren; nor be guilty of the Ruine of what they would be thought so much to contend for; if there be in them any love of Truth, any care of Justice, and tenderness of Conscience, any concern for the publick cause and our common Religion, let them think of these things.

In the first place therefore, to begin with the unreasonable-*Falseness* in general of this Jealousie wherewith some men are prepossess'd: Who would not stand amaz'd to hear that Church still'd Popish, the purity of whose Faith has been declar'd so expressly, so illustriously attested and spoken of through all the World? Know they, or care they what they say, that say this of a Church, that has solemnly and positively disown'd all the Usurp'd Authority, and condemn'd all the false Doctrines of the *Roman* See, its Supremacy, Infallibility, Transubstantiation, Idolatry of the Angels and Saints, Purgatory, &c. that has not done this in a corner, or in the ear, but proclaim'd it on the House top; that like a City set upon a Hill, has been as high and eminent on the one side, as *Rome* it self, with its seven boasted Hills, has been on the other; and has as remarkably oppos'd the Errors of that Church, as ever they had been advanc'd? What a new wonder must this be to the World, to hear the Church constituted by *Cranmer* and *Ridley*, accus'd of Popery; that Faith and Worship suspected to be un-reform'd, which was deliver'd down to us by those great Martyrs? Is this the reward of a Church, whose Sons have given so loud Testimony against

the *Roman*, in their Lives, and by their Deaths; who have still born the burden and heat of the day; who have felt the fiercest rage of the Enemy, and have return'd them the deadliest wounds; who have been foremost still in all encounters, all along in the last age, and in our own, the famous and the Victorious Champions of the Protestant Cause? If this Church, and these Men, after the declaration made in our Articles, after repeated subscriptions and abrenunciations, after all this zealous opposition of Popery, must be yet suspected of Popery: as well on the other side may the Decrees of the Council of *Trent* be said to comply with the Reformation, and the Pope himself be thought a Protestant.

One would imagine from the suspicions of these men that traduce us, that there was some small inconsiderable difference betwixt the Papists and us; something that might easily be reconcil'd: not that we differ as much from them, and in as substantial points, as those very persons that complain. For let all the Harmony of Protestant Confessions be consulted, and see if we are not of the Harmony, and our Articles do not conspire with theirs; if ours are not as express, and as directly opposite to the *Roman* Church; if there can be any hopes of reconciling us, sooner than of reconciling them.

For though there are of the Protestants that retain not some indifferent Ceremonies which we have; (and that we might well do it you will see presently) yet it is to be suppos'd they would not stand out against the *Roman* Church on that account, if the rest were well agreed: If they could once allow their Transubstantiation, Idolatry of Images, &c. if they could endure their Superstitious Rites; they would not stick at what might remain of a little Ancient Order and receiv'd Decency; and were that all, would as soon return to *Rome* as we.

Nothing can make an honest man suspect our Church of Popery, but his Ignorance what Popery is. He may take all that to be Popish which the Papists do and believe; and presume those guilty of their Superstitions, who do not dissent

to their whole Creed, and are not Nonconformists to their whole Practice; and in his opinion the purest Church of the Reformation must be that which is most opposit to the Church of *Rome*. But he forgets then that the Church of *Rome* is Christian, still, though abominably corrupted; that to run contrary to her in all things, must be to deny our God and Saviour; that by this Rule we must lay aside their Scripture as well as their Traditions, and neither give alms, fast nor pray, because it is the practice of that Church. He considers not that such an Anti-Papist is in a much worse condition than the Papist himself; and that if we take what the Pope proposes in gross and together, it is infinitely more dangerous to reject all, than to admit it.

By Popery therefore can be meant nothing, but the Corruptions that Church has suffer'd, and the Usurpations it has advanc'd. For the Faith of that Church was once as far spoken of as now its Errors are; and had she continued in that Purity, we ought to have been of her Communion; and now we are to depart from her, no otherwise than she shall be found to have departed from her self, to have varied from the Truth, and to have corrupted the Doctrine that was once deliver'd from the Saints.

Now the Test whereby these Doctrines are to be examin'd whether they are Popish (that is, Corrupt,) or no, is this; Whether or no they are Consonant to the Holy Scriptures. This being the Common Principle and Touch-stone with all Protestants, That nothing is to be Believ'd or Practic'd as Necessary to Salvation, but what is contain'd in the Scripture; and that nothing is to be Believ'd or Practic'd in any manner whatsoever, that is contrariant to it. A Principle this is deliver'd to us with the New Testament, by the first Ages that Receiv'd and Transmitted it. By this Test their Additional Traditionary Doctrines fall, their Infallibility proves the greatest Falsity, and their Illimited Jurisdiction is cut off; the number of the Sacraments is retrench'd; their Worship of the Host, of Images; Prayers to Saints, for those in Purgatory, or in an unknown Tongue,

Tongue, are taken away; whatever was impos'd as necessary to Salvation; and had no warrant from God's Word; or was otherwise propos'd, and yet repugnant to it. Such errors and corruptions you will find mark'd out in our Book of Articles, and there distinctly condemn'd.

But tho' nothing is to be enjoyn'd as necessary to Salvation, but what God himself, the Author of our Salvation, has declar'd; yet we are not to think that no circumstance is to be us'd in his service, that he has not distinctly command-ed: This being no Protestant Doctrine, but the greatest Fal-sity. For then no Action that is even of necessity to be per-form'd could be perform'd, had not God prescrib'd the Cir-cumstance too. Whereas on the contrary there cannot be a plainer Truth than this in the World, that he who orders an Action to be perform'd, and orders no Circumstance, must be suppos'd therefore to leave the choice of the Circumstance to Discretion. And it is as clear, that in such Cases where in private we are left to our private choice, there in publick we are to be directed by the publick Discretion, the Election of the Superiours. Provided always that in both Cases no circumstance be us'd, that is contrary to the Intention of the Action, and the Will of God.

It was therefore in the Power of our Spiritual Governours after they had retrench'd, what they were constrain'd to take away, all that was unlawfully believ'd or practis'd, Idolatrous, Superstitious, or Erroneous; to retain or reject, as they should see cause, all indifferent circumstantial things: which as they were not commanded by God, so neither were they forbidden by him. Innumerable Ceremonies therefore they cut off: Some inseparable Companions of the falsities and super-stitions they had abolish'd, some impertinent to the main action, others choking or incumbring it. And some too they left; so few, that they rather expected to be ask'd why no more; and those the freest from offence, and the fittest to be retain'd. For they consider'd that an innocent useful Ceremony, which had either been laudably us'd before Popery came in, or was not proper to the superstition to which it had

had been annexed, when purg'd of that superstition, was restor'd to its Innocence and Indifference, and might be us'd as lawfully now as in its first state. And therefore though they took the liberty to leave off several rites however in themselves innocent, and in use before Popery began, because they were of little Edification, yet they kept up others which appear'd more necessary to the Church, and which at the same time might shew both their Temper and Moderation towards the Modern *Roman*, which they were forc'd to leave, and their respect to the Primitive, which they desir'd to imitate.

And with such a view as this, if you will look upon the particulars for which we are accus'd, you will see how little of Popery (that is, Corruption or Superstition) there is to be found.

The Particulars in which we chiefly differ, are these: Government by Bishops, a Liturgy of some Ancient Prayers, Kneeling at the Communion, the Cross at Baptism, the Surplice, and the Observation of some Christian Fasts and Feasts.

1. First then as to Government by Bishops, had it been a thing purely indifferent, we might have lawfully retain'd it; and our Church might have taken leave to have chosen a sort of Aristocracy, as others have been pleas'd with a kind of Democracy. But take it as it is, intimated in the writings of the Apostles, and manifestly of their Institution; we then had been oblig'd to reduce it, if the *Roman* Government had been *Presbyterian*. When we found it therefore there, what reason had we to abolish it? Shall we allow the Pope so much Power as to make that unlawful by his Use, which the Apostles and their Disciples have recommended to us by theirs?

2. For our Liturgy of some Ancient Prayers, is it Popish as a set form? or as a form of those Prayers? A set form is so expedient and necessary to the Church, if but for the sake of

of the People (that they may be sure to have no other Petitions suggested than what are fit, that their Devotion may not suffer by the weakness or indiscretion of the Minister, that they may know beforehand how to prepare their thoughts what frame of Spirit is to be brought to Church) that I may take leave to say, had a set form been us'd, not only in the superstitions of *Rome*, but in the Charms of a Magician, it ought however to be us'd in the service of God. If the Papists, if the Heathens used set forms, because it was the most certain, orderly and best considered way, fittest for the Worship of a God; must we therefore be forbid? because they did well, are we therefore to do worse? And so for the Prayers themselves, they are most of them elder than Popery, and no more Popish than the Lords Prayer. And if there are any of their composure; yet if they are good, and according to the will of God, why may they not be offered to him by us, as well as by them? Nay, may they not be more acceptable to God, as they may be a testimony how willing we would be to keep the Unity of his Church; and to joyn with all Christians, were we permitted in all their Devotions? If our Accusers would shew us any Popery in our Prayers, they ought to shew us where we pray to any but God, or for any thing for which we want his Warrant; where we use any Intercession, but our Saviours; or what part of our *English* Language, is an unknown Tongue.

3. The Surplice is nothing but an Innocent Habit made of Linnen, which is appointed to be the Dress of the Priest when he officiates. It cannot but be acknowledg'd, that it is a fit point of Decency to assign all that are in Orders some certain fashion of Garment in publick, if but in the streets, and when they appear abroad. And if this be a Gown, and the Papists wear one too, is a Gown therefore Popish? In like manner as the Ministers of the Church are directed to an Uniform Decency abroad; so particularly, and with the same innocent intention they are order'd to wear a distinct Robe, when they perform the Publick Service in the Church: That as the Common Devotion is administred by a Person set apart, in a Place, and at a Time set apart, so it may be done

done too in a peculiar Garment. And if the Papists do so too, even so let them; they do well. If they had invented the Garment, we need not have scrupled to follow this one *Italian* Fashion. But they took it up from earlier Custom, and it is no more Popery, then the Ministers, then the Citizens, the Lawyers, or the Judges Garments. If they could say we placed any Sanctity in it, attributed any Efficacy to it, it would be something: but as we use it, it may as well be a piece of Popery, To be at Church with a Band, or with a Crevat.

4. Kneeling at the Communion is far too from being Popish; that is, either a Corruption or Superstition. The Papists indeed kneel to the Host, as to their God: but not so particularly then, when they Receive it, as when immediately after Consecration, it is Elevated, and shewn to them for that purpose by the Priest. But we that Kneel when we Receive the Communion, Kneel not *TO IT*, but *AT IT*. And what Posture can there be fitter for those, that in the deepest sense of their own great Unworthiness, and of Gods unexpressible Mercy, are going to take the Seal of their Pardon, and the Pledge of their Salvation; What better Posture would they have for those, that at that time are to be in the Highest Acts of Devotion, the most Relenting Contrition, and the greatest Thanksgiving? If on that Occasion the Papists Kneel too, and with a Wrong Intention; why should any Fault of theirs hinder me from expressing my Duty? What they do on No Reason, why should not I do on the Best? especially when we have so solemnly disclaimed them, and so expressly declar'd our own. As we are not to disuse the Holy Sacrament, because the Papists have made it an Idol: So may we continue our Reverence, tho' they have paid it Adoration.

5. The Cross in Baptism, or rather after Baptism, has in it as little of Popery too. To Worship the Cross, to Ascribe any Vertue to the Sign, or to promise ones Self any Defence from it, may be Popery: but to Use it as a Sign, only to signify and declare, can never come under
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that Notion, nor be term'd Superstition; no more than it would be to pronounce the Word. Tho' the Cross was *Foolishness to the Greeks, a Stumbling-block to the Jew*; and has been since to the Papists too, a Stumbling-block and an Idol; yet are we still to Glory in it, and to have the Memorial of it in a high and precious Esteem: neither concern'd on one hand at the Gentiles Mockery, nor on the other at the Roman Superstition. The Primitive Christians, it is certain, Us'd this Sign in the Earliest Times, very frequently: with that on all Occasions they put themselves in mind of our Saviour's Suffering for them; and with that they Arm'd themselves against their own. So they Saluted their Brethren, and so they Defied the Heathen. It was the common Token and Mark of those that belong'd to Christ; and was afterwards the Imperial Banner of the Great *Constantine*, the first Christian Emperour, and under that (by the Grace of God) were those Victories obtain'd, that put an end to the Heathen Persecutions. Our first Reformers therefore finding the Cross of Christ made the Subject of much Superstition among the *Romanists*, its Image Worship'd, and I do not know what Vertue imputed to the Signs; and yet remembering withal the Devout Practice of the First and Best Ages; as they abhor'd to Countenance the one, so they were tender too of Condemning the other: and in that Intention, after the Sacrament of Baptism is Administred, the Priest is Ordered, when he declares Audibly the Admission of the Child into Christ's Flock; to declare Visibly too by that known blessed Sign, what that Shame is the Christian ought to despise, how he is openly always, and as it were on his Forehead to bear the Profession of his Faith, what that Banner is, under which he is now Listed, and in what Warfare he stands Engag'd. Our Church applying that to its Members once at least in their Lives, which the Primitive repeated so often; and doing that on so proper an Occasion, which heretofore had been done on all. in hopes of being excus'd on the part of the Ancient Christian, by its Care to avoid the Faulty Practice of the Papists; and in hopes of being justified to its Members and Brethren,

Brethren, by so Great, and so Reverend an Authority. And that it might be impossible for any Stander by, how weak soever, to fall into any Superstition himself, or to suspect it in the Minister; he never uses the Action Dumb, but Proclaims the Edifying Signification, and speaks out in plain words the wholesome meaning. A Sign This, Nobly and Generously taken up by the Elder Christians, in the midst of their Blaspheming Heathen Neighbours; own'd now with like Courage under the insulting Mahumetan: A Lesson as necessary for that part of *Christendom* that confines now upon the *Turk*; not to be look'd upon as Unreasonable or Improper, by those Nations that, by the Mercy of God, have yet a better Neighbourhood: always of great Edification to the Devout, but particularly to be remembred by those whom Commerce carrys into remoter Countries: where tho, if Report mistake not, it has by some been most scandalously forgot. So Clear and Free is the Sign of the Cross, as Us'd by us, from the least shadow of Superstition.

6. Lastly the Fasts and Feasts of the Church come as unjustly under the same groundless imputation. The time of assembling, is a Circumstance of our Worship that cannot be left to particular choice, but must be determin'd in Common: and what is to be done at that time, must be determin'd too in any Orderly Assembly: so that it must be left to the Discretion of the Governours, when we are to keep a Festival, and when a Fast. As to the Keeping of the Lord's Day, our Church was not at Liberty: without she would have rashly departed from Apostolick observation, and the Continued practice of all Ages and Places since the beginning of Christianity. As for the Keeping of Easter, she was too under the like Obligation: the Annual Feast of the Resurrection, the Great Lords Day, being known to have been the Chief, and the Cause of all the Weekly. And as to the Fast of Good Fryday, it was nigh as early as the Feast of the Resurrection. They lamented their sins our Saviour dy'd for on the Fryday before, as constantly as they commemorated His Rising again for our Salvation the Sunday after. And in Order to the

keeping of those two great Days with more Devotion; there was likewise in the Church some time beforehand set apart, for better Recollection, and greater Preparation: The number of Days in some Places more, in some less. That of Forty, no Superstitious Number, had obtain'd in the *Western* Country; and therefore was still kept: and would to God it were as Religiously observed, as it was Piously appointed. *Whitsunday* too, the Day on which the Holy-Ghost descended, was Observ'd Always, and Universally by the Ancient Church. Onely the Nativity of our Saviour was of later remembrance, but yet before *Papery* came in: First observ'd in the *Western* Church; and afterwards taken up by the *Eastern*, in *St. Chrysostom's* time, as it stands recommended by him to the People of *Antioch*. Other times besides these have been Appointed too for our Religious Assemblies; which besides the general Worship of God, the Examples of his Saints and Martyrs are gratefully remembred, and piously propos'd, and those Days are call'd commonly by the Name of the Person then particularly Commemorated: Not that the Worship is to the Saint, or that the Day is employed in his Honour; onely because on the Occasion of his Memory or Martyrdom, we come together as to Pay our other Duties to our God, so to thank him for the Graces of h's Servant, and to be Edified and Instructed by the Example. It is true the Church heretofore, when God had been bountiful to them in the Number of his Saints, increased in some proportion those Days of his Worship: and it is to be Confessed that *Papery* had both acknowledged Saints to God, which he might not own, and gave the True Saints an Honour, which they must disclaim. But with us the Number of those Days is not greater then that the Affairs of the World may well comply; and as the Number of the Apostles is not large, so their Sanctity sure is unquestionable: and then on those Days we neither Beseech by their Merits, nor Recommend our Selves to their Intercession. You see then how unreasonable the Objection of *Papery* is here too: but see to what absurdity it goes on. First it is Suppos'd *Papery* to keep a Day in the Memory of an Apostle, and

and then it is thought as *Papists*, to call him a Saint. A Great Person at *Geneva*, it seems, presum'd it somewhat *Papist* to Observe Sunday it self: and consider'd about Changing the Day. Nay some are so perversely Superstitious on the other hand; as that That Day, on which all the Christian World remembers our Saviour's *Bitter Passion*, has seem'd to them the fitter for a Feast; and the Time Univerſally now set Apart for the Joyful Memory of his Blessed Nativity, the more proper for a Fast. This indeed is not like the *Papists*: No, it is like a *Jew*, or a *Heathen*.

So I hope it has sufficiently appear'd, how little guilty those *Uſages* are of the Popery of which they are accus'd: the chief designs of these papers. But having not been able to discourse of their Innocence without some discovery of their use, I shall crave the Readers patience for a short digression, wherein he may see that the first Governours of our Reform'd Church did not only use their Liberty, and impose them as things Indifferent; but as things expedient, and to which they were oblig'd in all Godly Prudence.

For altho the Persons who now enforce this account may think so much of themselves as that the weakest of their Possible Jealousy ought to have been consider'd most; yet the First Reformers were not to engage themselves in a task so endless, nor to content themselves with so narrow a view; several other respects more weighty, and things more practicable did expect their care.

For in the Reformation there were more considerations to be had, then some are pleased, or capable to understand. There was a Regard to Truth, to Increase of Piety to Gravity, and Decency, to Antiquity; to All the Modern Churches, the Roman it self, the Grecian, and the then Reform'd: Regards then had, and ever since to be continued. They were indeed to provide in the first place, that their prescrib'd Rites should be such as might not in any manner reasonably offend their own members, but be the most fit to raise and promote

promote their Devotion : They were too at the same time to take care, that no offence should be given to other Churches, no just scandall even to that they left.

For as to the Church of *Rome*, tho we were forc'd to part from Her, it was to be withal Christian meekness and Charity ; with a desire that she would return to Herself and us ; and would at last follow the Reformation, which she had been often desir'd to begin. And therefore when we cut off Her Corruptions and Superstitions, we retain'd some of her most Laudable and Ancient Ways ; not leaving them tho' Godly and Venerable, because Practis'd by Her, as the Spirit of Opposition would have directed ; but for that Cause the rather practising them our Selves, as it was fit for Christians and Brethren. All the Innocent Ceremonies indeed we did not keep ; because their Number was Excessively great, and they of small or no Edeification. Tho' under that Burden we could have been content to rest, had that been the Onely Dispute, and were it to have been the Condition of our Peace. But the Tyranny of their Corruptions, by which they forc'd us out of their Communion, having restor'd us to our First Liberty, and taken off that Humane Right or Usurpation by which their Bishops pretended Authority oyer Ours (from a Prescription whose Date we know) ; we us'd then that Liberty too in other matters : and both shew'd that we were not under Bondage, and that we were in Charity ; leaving that Church a Pattern for Her to imitate, and Using towards her a Temper by which she was not needlessly provoked.

So did the first Reformers discharge their Duty towards the *Roman* Church : by this Conduct giving to the Sober and Well-minded all reason to commend us, and taking away from the Rest all occasion to Blaspheme : reducing themselves in all Material Points, to the Standard of the *Primitive Church* ; and in lesser matters taking leave to vary, as several Countreys then of the same Ages had us'd to do : in hopes that other Nations would by the Grace of God

God be at last invited by so fair an Example; we not proposing our selves so much, as the Ancient Church to their Imitation.

The same Apology might too be Satisfactory to the *Greek* Church; from whom if we differ in Doctrines or Worship, it was because we presumed our selves constrained by the Truth so to do: but that we affected not wantonly an unnecessary Contrariety, they might perceive by our choosing some such Custom as had the general Approbation, and by conforming to Antient Usage. A Church of another Climat not being to expect that we of the *North-West* should Agree in all; but that it might appear by Common Practice of some things, that it was not out of Opposition that we had abstained from the rest.

Such Respect there was to be to the *Roman* and *Greek* Churches: there was too a consideration of the Reform'd, the *Lutheran*; a chief regard was to be had to her, and the upper hand of Fellowship given as to the *Elder Sister*. She first had Protested against the *Romish* Corruptions, stood the dangerous Shock of *Papal Tyranny*, and boldly advanc'd a Reformation; which too she Planted wide, and Setled in very Powerful Countreys. This Noble Example our First Reformers followed: from Them they learn'd to cast off all Modern Usurpation, and to restore according to the Earlier Pattern: not taking our Copy indeed from theirs, but from the same ancient Original, tho' with some difference, yet with a near resemblance. Our Episcopacy by the Pity of our Princes was left more Entire, than with Them in some Places. The Doctrine of *Consubstantiation*, which determines the Mode of Christ's Real Presence at the Time of Participation, we were not Satisfied in; but yet as they condemn'd the Idolatry and Superstitions of the *Papish Transubstantiation* equally with us, so did we equally with them Adore the Mystery of the Holy Sacrament, and were ready to Communicate on our Knees. After their Example our Churches and Cathedrals were not Neglected, the Places where Gods Honour dwells;

dwells; nor His Altars, where His Mercy and Love shew themselves forth. The Worship of the Soul was Com-manded to be express'd in the Posture of the Body; The Bowing to the Holy Name of *JESUS* recommen-ded; and a decent Gravity every where kept up, tho' with fewer Ceremonies.

So Serviceable were these Orders of ours in respect of the rest of *Christendom*, and so fit to be retain'd for their Edification in Love (the Fruit of which we had the Satisfaction to reap, not only from the Approbation of those our Brethren, not so well Satisfied elsewhere, but from the Confession even of some *Romanists* themselves.) They were too as Proper for our own Edification, and for the Advancement of Gods Worship here.

To that Purpose these Rules were as exactly fitted, as if it had been the only Design. For what could have been better design'd for the Honour of God, and Increase of Religion amongst Men, then that the People should be Ordered (had it not been their Custom before) Solemnly to meet to pay their Devotions on certain Days of the Week; that there should be Annual Commemorations of the Mysteries of our Redemption, and of the Zeal and Doctrines of the Blessed Apostles. And how could our Devotions be more Certain and Sufficient, more Grave and Regular, than under a well consider'd Form? If the Minister were then in another Garment, did not the very Sight of him Admonish, before the Exhortation began, that the People were to lay aside their ordinary Thoughts, not to meet him there as Abroad, but to be a Holy Con-gregation? If they were directed to be on their Knees at Prayers, and at the Communion; was it more than be-came their Duty? or a Hinderance think we to their Devotion? Or was it to be expected, that when a Con-gregation saw a Person admitted into the Number, and the Doctrines of the Cross declar'd over him, as the Terms of his Reception; they should be Offended that it was so evidently set forth, and declar'd to the Eye as well as to the

the Ear ; and should so far forget its Benefits, as rather at that time to think impertinently of an old Superstition that was gone, and of Popery that was abolished ; than to joyn and recognize our Saviours Death, and their former Vows, and zealously to resolve the Profession of their Holy Faith in despite of all its Enemies ? But on this Subject I proceed no further to the other unquestionable parts of our Ritual ; it being plain, that even the lesser Appointments have their proper use.

When therefore the Reformation began ; for such just Reasons, and several Respects to others, and to our selves, was the present Form Established.

At that time the other Protestant Church of *Calvin's Model* (that the Reader may not think it forgot above) was but just set up in the narrow Territory of *Geneva* ; and therefore, indeed, not much considered by our Reformers ; only under their general Rule, that as they begg'd leave in Indifferent things to use their own Liberty, so they impos'd not on other Churches. By our leave therefore the Reformers of that place might have us'd fewer Ceremonies, and those of their own Invention, so they would be pleas'd not to dictate their Regulations as necessary Rules to us : Nay, even there, where otherwise we might think they had gone too far, the necessity of their Circumstances might have pleaded for them ; provided they prescribed not their Orders and Discipline to foreign Countries. Though therefore they had abrogated Episcopacy, though Lay Elders, and Lay Deacons were Novelties in the Church of Christ, though a Liturgy of Prayers was wanting, and they seem'd in several things to condemn the ancient Church too much ; yet they were still regarded by us as Brethren, their Correspondence desired, and Communion with them maintain'd.

But when the Neighbourhood of *Geneva* had, with the Doctrine of the Reformation, carried this peculiar Discipline into *France* : It began thence to come over hither as a Mode, and to take, it may be, the more because it was new. And then it was urg'd, not as convenient to the Circumstances of a little Town, or of a scatter'd distressed People

ple under Popish Bishops, but as necessary to all that professed the purity of the Gospel: And it was given out to be as fit to reform from us to them, as it was before from the Pope to us. The first Rule of this new Method (I mean as imported and translated to us) was, to have no Circumstance in Divine Worship, that was not expressly determined in Scripture. By this Rule they cut off all our Establishments, as they thought, at once; but by this they could have none of their own; for their Elders were not to be found in the Text, considered better; and unordain'd Annual Deacons had as little ground, not to mention their lesser Rites. That Rule therefore failing, they were to have another measure of Purity; and that was, to be at the greatest possible distance from the Church of *Rome*: And then we were to have no Bishops, because the Pope was one; we were not to pray to God at set hours, or by a set form, because the *Papists* did; we were to have no Christian Fasts or Feasts; and all our Observations, though never so Edifying and Primitive, were to be laid aside by those that would be Pure, if they had been us'd at *Rome*.

We have already, though briefly, discovered the falsity of both those Principles. The first was a gross Falacy put upon the People by their Teachers; who, to the great Maxime of the Reformation, That no necessary Christian Doctrine was to be received not warrantable by Scripture; had Sophistically joyn'd this great Untruth, That no Circumstance of Worship was to be us'd that could not be shewed there. The other too, that condemn'd indifferently all the Practices of the *Roman* Church whatever, was nothing else but a Sophistical Imposture put in the place of this Truth, That none of its Corruptions were to be retained; it was nothing but a disingenuous unchristian abuse of good Peoples Zeal; to make them dislike the good usages of ours and the ancient Church, with the same warmth they rejected the Depravation of the *Roman*.

Either of these two Principles, if they had been true, would have put an end to the Dispute about Church Ceremonies; and therefore, though Baited and Confuted, they failed not to be always inculcated into the Ears of the People.

ple. To prove the Rites of our Church unlawful step by step, had been a troublesome Task, and might not have succeeded well; either the People might not have bourn the length of their Discourse, or seen through the weakness. But here to cut the work short, they had a Maxime or two, that their Followers might easily grasp, and it may be as easily swallow. And accordingly one, or both of these, the People were always taught to believe. These were the little lumps of Leaven that were cast in, and all along fermented the Nation, till the whole was Leavened; and they were work'd up at last to the utmost Perfection, and most exalted state, to the Holy Covenant; whose great ends forsooth were, to pluck up Episcopacy, Root and Branch as Popish, and to Establish Presbytery, the Form of Gods own appointment.

But these false Principles could not be fixed so; they were pursued by their own Party, and run down in Fact. For as to the First, there rose up those that could no more spy out Presbyterianism in the Bible, than they had been suffered to see Episcopacy before: Ministry and Tythes were not to be found in the Gospel, they said: They asked you your Text for every thing you did; for saying You rather than Thou; for taking off the Hat before God or Man. And so as to the other Maxime, it was found out at last, that *Geneva* it self, was not far from *Italy*; and Classes and Synods (who would have thought it?) were esteemed a little *Popish* too; if they valued themselves on their distance from *Rome*; there were those that could go farther than they. The Independents presently outwent them: these were outstripped by others; and at last the Quaker seemed before them all, but all things moving circularly, these last came very nigh to that point on the one side, from which they were most remote on the other; instead of one pretending Infallible Spirit, we had Legions; and all the Opposition to the Pope of *Rome* ended in this, that every Man was to be Pope himself.

These were the visible and palpable absurdities, consequent to those two false Maxims; and those Maxims have been mentioned here upon occasion indeed of the *Geneva* Reformation; but with no design of undue Reflection. They being but Additions grafted on that way since it was brought into

England, not natural nor proper to it, though with us too closely combin'd: Ridiculous untruths of a destructive Nature, to be disclaimed and discountenanced by all sober Men.

However our Foreign Brethren of that Constitution, as they design'd their Form of Government for themselves, and not for us, for a Bond of Peace and Discipline at home, and not to give disturbance abroad; so they will, we do not question, give us leave to think so well of our own way, as not to be willing to exchange it for any other; that may in Charity be allowed to stand on equal terms, but will not we hope pretend advantage.

For Good Men, and who know the grounds and reasons of our Reformation, were at a loss, what the late Design might mean of bringing our Church nearer to the Protestants abroad (to those of our Brethren of *Calvin's* way we suppose they intended.) We hope the Intention was not to insinuate an unjust reproach; as if we had not the Amity and Affection for them which we ought, did not rejoice in their Edification, or compassionate their Affliction: but only this, to alter our Constitution into a nearer resemblance with theirs: But if any of ours desired this for Amendment, as a farther Reformation and greater Perfection, it was because they were not pleas'd to consider their own frame well: nor could any honest man of our Church, and who understood her right, have ever Consented. And if the Designes was only Political, (though the Policy appears not) yet why might it not be as fit for those Protestants to come nearer to us? But, not to stand on such terms, how could we have went nigher to the *Calvinist*; without departing from the *Lutheran*? Our Church is already in the middle, and reaching out her Hands on either side; settled there long ago, by weighty Reason, and upon mature Deliberation: for although the word Protestant has been here at home appropriated to a Party; and the Reformed Church abroad has been still understood onely for those of one way: Yet every one knows that the *Lutheran* is the first Reformed; and that the term Protestant is only proper to them, and particularly to those onely of the *German* Nation. This then is the first Fallacy endeavoured to be put upon the People; that those

to whom some of our Dissenters pretend a nearer approach, are the onely Reform'd and Protestants in the World: as if the *Lutheran* were not to be understood by his own Name. The other is this, that th^e *Calvinist* is so great, that the other deserves not to be mention'd: whereas the other have still been the far greater Number, and the much more considerable. Our Trade indeed makes us look into *Holland*, (where tho' the true *Calvinists* make not above a third of the people;) and our Fashions into *France*, (and would to God their Numbers increas'd there;) we speak much of *Switzerland*, and the Lower Palatinate: but we forget to take notice of the large Countrys that are intirely of the other Profession; as *Denmark*, *Sweden*, the Dominions of the Elector of *Saxony*, and *Brandenburgh*, of the Great House of *Lunenburgh*, and the many Imperial Cities. So that the Design mention'd before of coming nearer to the Reformation abroad, was nothing else but this: to perswade us to go farther from the Universal Church Primitive, from the Major part of the Moderns Reformed, from our innocent agreement with general Christianity, and from those of our selves who are much edified by our Present Constitution; to come nearer to those abroad, who (to speak in the fairest language) are not better constituted than our selves; and to comply with those at home, who are certainly neither the greater nor the best part of us; to give way to the falsest and most destructive Prejudice, opposite to all Catholick Agreement, and to Countenance and Encourage a most censurable and Seditious Separation.

But to return from this Digression: We have seen upon the View of the Particulars most in question no Popery in them, no Superstition nor Idolatry, no favour nor tendency to any of the *Roman* Corruptions; nothing in them that is not directed to the promoting of Gods Honour, the raising of our Devotion, and the Teaching of our Duty; nothing but what either was in use before Popery took place, or must be allow'd commendable even in the Papists themselves.

And yet notwithstanding all the Zealous abhorrence our first Reformers had for Popery, declar'd by their Writings, and confirm'd by the Testimony of their Deaths; notwithstanding the constant continued Professions of the same Faith

still made by all that officiate in the Church; Altho' all possible care has been taken to prevent the Suspicion, and disavow all Popish Intention; yet our Church is Popish, and we all Papists still: The grossest and the most inexcusable Calumny that ever was invented.

We have seen already to what ends this notorious Untruth was first devis'd by the Dissenting Party; to widen the Separation, to fix men in it, and to keep them at an irreconcilable distance: But I cannot tell whether it had not been more excusable before God and Man to have separated upon no Reason, than upon one so scandalously false. They had then only been accountable for their departure, and forsaking us, but now besides for all this Injustice which they have done us, and the Calumnies under which they have left us. For so under the Old Law, where a man might at pleasure have put away his Wife, and without Cause shewn; yet if he had given occasion of Speech against her, and brought an Evil Name upon her, had accus'd her to have been Corrupt; he was then by the Judgement of the Elders to make reparation by a Pecuniary Mult, to suffer Corporal Chastisement, and not to put her away for ever. If then those Persons had not in them that Brotherly Love, which should have made them desirous of our Company; nor that Sence of their Duty to our common Father, by which we are oblig'd to make our joint Appearance before Him; yet in common justice they should have forbore their Slaunders, and in reverence to the God of Truth they should not have condemned us so rashly, in matters that concern him. For seems it so small a thing to any man, especially to one that professes a more tender Sence of his Duty, to accuse one rashly and falsely before God and the World of Superstitions, Abominations, and Idolatry, of perverting the Gospel of Christ, and corrupting his Worship, of carrying the Souls of men into Error and Sin, and endangering their Eternal Salvation: Were this Scandal spoken of any single Priest, that had the care of the smallest Parish, what Sufficient Satisfaction could be made him? But when 'it is spoke of the Pastors and Teachers of a Great People, of the Constitution and Frame of a whole National Church, what

what amends shall be given then? For here the consideration is not onely of Disreputation and Loss of Honour unjustly sustain'd, but of the Horrible Mischiefs that have followed: Nor do those suffer so much, of whom the Scandal is said, as those do who credit and entertain it. The greatest prejudice is not to us, but to those who on that account are gone from us: who have been scar'd by it into Schism, and Faction; have been engag'd into uncharitableness, and the breach of the Peace of God, the Unity of his Church, into Heats and Animosities, into Temporal and Spiritual Disobedience; who have been thence perverted into Deadly Errors and Heresies, and hastning from us have run upon Rocks, and made Shipwrack of their Faith. These are the damages of that Wicked Scandal, to be estimated by the Hazard and Perdition of thousands of Souls: the loss is to the Catholick Church, and to be answered for hereafter to the Great Shepherd. So big is this foul slander of Infinite Mischief: tho' its single guilt be so great, that it needs no accumulation.

Judge not that ye be not Judged, says our Lord and Master: And, who art thou that judgest another's Servant? says his Blessed Apostle. So unwarrantable and dangerous a thing it is to pass a hasty Peremptory sentence, even upon our fellows and equals, in any thing that relates to God: it is to attempt upon his Authority, and to usurp his Seat. He then that passes a Sentence notoriously unjust, what is he to expect at the day of the righteous Judgment of God? *And, who art thou that so judgest not only another's Servant, but thy own Superior, and whom the Great Master has commanded thee to obey?* If thy Slanders were against any foreign Sister Church of God, it were a high breach of Charity, and for which you ought to beg pardon of Christendom: but to Calumniate maliciously ones own Church, and to charge her falsely with the highest Crimes; is a Lye not onely against those to whom you owe common respect, but to whom you are to pay Duty and Subjection; it is as if you Blasphem'd your Father, or your Mother.

But to pass away from such sad Considerations, on which tho' the concern'd should reflect very seriously; and to conclude:

clude in the easiest and most favourable manner : Those that go this way to destroy our Reputation with the Vulgar, have not provided well for their own with intelligent men, they will not after this, be well able to make good their Pretences to much knowledge, and their Profession of greater zeal for Truth. For the difference betwixt us and Popery is so wide, that those who accuse us of it, except they excuse themselves by ignorance, cannot be well allow'd by the world to boast of Conscience and Integrity.

I cannot tell whether most of their Teachers are not directly guilty of this great Untruth : However, whether or no they Preach it for positive Doctrine, yet this we are sure of ; there is nothing more common with their Auditors : it is this fancy that keeps them fast to their own way, and gives them their greatest aversion for us.

Some of the People indeed out of Ignorance are betrayed into this Slander : and yet there too the Ignorance is something too gross, and too easie to be removed, than that it should Qualifie the fault much. They need for better information but peruse our Articles of Religion, which are very short ; and look into our Prayers, a Book in every ones hand ; they need but come to those near Places, where the Law and their Duty calls them ; and have patience to hear their proper Teachers : And therefore even this their Ignorance is too much their Fault, to become their Defence.

But however this Blind Zeal and weak Ignorance of the people, if it shall be allow'd in Plea for them, must it not then be charg'd upon those who have usurp'd the care of them ? Those who have unwarrantably and in their own wrong taken upon them their Instruction, are they not to answer for their culpable want of Knowledge ? But how careful should they be that they do not beget these uncharitable prejudices, nor dis-ingenuously cherish such untruths, that they are not the Causes of that weakness, and the Authors of their Ignorance ?

For whence is it, that those People should be suppos'd to bring such Prejudices, but from the Discourses of their Meetings ? Do they not there find Popery and our Church in a breath ? the Rites of that Church so mention'd, as to include ours ?

and

and themselves flattered with the Title of True Protestants, to our Exclusion? If they do not there broadly call the Surplice a Rag of *Babylon*, or our Prayers the English Mass; yet are not will Worship, and Superstition, carnal Ordinances, and Idolatry spoken out on those Occasions? and the People given to understand by Oblique Reflections, and peculiar Praises, that there is as little Difference as they have heard Distinction?

Hence it comes to pass that the True bred Dissenter will no more come into our Church, than into a House of *Rimmon*: a Cathedral is a very Abomination. To be at Prayers, would be to be at Mass: and if you ask them their Exception at the Book, they Thank God they have never look'd in't. They leave their Friends before they are buried, they are so frightened at the Service that is to be said: as if the Parson in white were an Apparition. And when a Relation of theirs is to be Christned; tho' the Office be performed at home, in no Superstitious place; yet they will not assist at that for which they came, and fly away from the Sign of the Cross as fast, as the Papists fancy evil Spirits do. Or if any of these upon Surprise or mistake chance to be present at the Prayers; they take care to shew their aversion by their looks and gesture; they put themselves streight in some cross posture of body, or disposition of mind: if the Minister calls to kneel, they will chuse to sit; and when the holy words he pronounces speak the Worship of God, Praises or Prayers to him, they devoutly think of the Superstition or Ignorance of the Priest, and smile at the Folly of the rest. Such Profanation do a great part of them take our Worship to be: and so fearful are they of partaking in it.

These are the ridiculous and truly ignorant conceits of their better meaning followers; highly unjust to us, but most Scandalous to their own Teachers. But these absurd fancies are not more ridiculous, than the pretences their Leaders draw from them: when they desire Allowances for the weaknesses of those they have made so; and would have the Government on all Occasions to indulge such Errors as they shall be able to teach: using the old known Method, instructing the People to fancy Grievances first, and then

in their Name, but for their own Interests, Importuning a Re-
cess.

But these Leaders of the Party might Consult better for the weakness of their People, if they would try to cure it by better Information: and they might easily acquit themselves of the Guilt of Slaughtering our Church, by beginning to do her Right. Let them then for once come nearer the Reformed Churches abroad themselves; and own that to the World, which those have never Scrupled to declare. Let them honestly tell their Congregations the Plain Truth: that we detest and Renounce the Popish Corruptions and Superstitions as much as they; that the Belief and Doctrine of our Church is the same with theirs; that the very few Ceremonies we have retain'd, have nothing of Sin or Abomination in them. Let them confess that a good devout Prayer is never the less so, for being provided before hand, read out of a Book, or by one in White, and not in Black or Gray; that if the People will but bring their thoughts to Church as well prepar'd as the words are, they will be heard most acceptably by their God. Let them own that there is no more harm in the Sign of the Cross made by the hand, than in the word that signifies it from the mouth; and that men may be as innocently shewn one way as another, what thing they are not to be ashamed of. Let them acknowledg that there is no more Sin intended, in being on our Knees at the Communion, than there is in being truly penitent and humbly thankful. And lastly, to sum up all, Let them but declare that a Christian of our Communion, who Worships God as is prescrib'd him there, and believes and obeys the Doctrine there taught him, is by the Grace of Christ in the Ordinary way of Salvation; Let them, I say, but publish this to those numbers they have called together (and if they are Truths, in Conscience they are bound to do it;) they may then be heard to excuse themselves from the blind uncharitableness and unrighteous Slanders of their Auditors, against a Church of Christ, so fam'd and so great a part of the Reformation.

Hitherto I have only represented the strange injustice offered to our Church, an undeniable and demonstrable injustice: neither is it my intention to speak of that Personal one, under
which

which its Ministers have suffered besides. The ground indeed for such a Jealousie, is not impossible in Nature; but it is from the same want of Charity, that those Persons who are under the greatest Obligations of Conscience against Popery, must be thought its greatest Favourers. If in a Multitude one or two single men may have been under the suspicion of having Apostatized; yet how does that affect the rest of the Body, who will be the first to disown and renounce them? Were the eleven remaining Apostles to be termed Traytors for Judas? Or is our Nation to be denominated from the few Malefactors of its number, which it punishes as soon as it discovers? We have of Church-men some too, it may be inclinable to the Separation: why are not the Dissenters pleased too for their sakes to think favourably of the whole: and to let us all be True Protestants on the one side, by same reason we are Papists on the other? But is it not strange that those who have distinctly subscrib'd to the Articles of the Reformation, at each Degree in the University, at the promotion to either Orders, at their Institution to any Preferment, who have publicly read and owned these Articles in their several Congregations, that those who have given all manner of assurances to the World, must be suspected still and traduc'd, by those that have yet given none, of whom we know not yet, if they themselves do, but at random and at large, of what profession of Religion they are? God pardon them their uncharitableness: and we are to thank them, that they have not made us *Jews* or *Mahumetans*.

It may have been enough to all honest Men, and truly Conscientious, to have shewn them the untruth of the prejudice that has been raised against our Church, and the iniquity of the Irreligious Slander: as they feared God, so they would be afraid to speak Evil falsely of a Church of Christ, and of the Service of their Maker; nay, we might hope that such upon the first Reflection would be the more hasty and forward to return to our Communion, lest they should seem any longer to countenance so unjust and ungodly a Calumny. But they may be pleas'd to consider further, not only the sinfulness, but the Mischief of the Action: and that we are not so sensible of the injustice done to our selves;

as of its ill Consequences, the Damage and Prejudice it brings on the Cause of God.

The Differences and Schisms that have happened in Protestant Churches have, it is known, been very scandalous to the Common Cause, and formed into an Argument against us. It is said by our Adversaries, that as soon as we fell from them, we fell from Unity and Order, and that the infinite folly of the following Separations, was but a Consequent natural to the first: That it was a Spirit of Pride and Opposition that engaged us first in the Schism; and that we had no Bowels for the Divisions of the Church. See therefore, say they, how they break into endless Fractions; they are no more tender of their own Communion, than they were of ours; they part out of Humour and Fancy, and in this they do us right, they submit to no other Constitution.

It is true, that the wantonness and petulance of Men has given too much place to this reproach already; but when the measure of a thorough Reformation shall be the utmost Opposition to *Rome*, and a Protestant Church quarrelled and reputed *Papish* for some common innocent Usages; then it is that the *Romish* Advocates may triumph well, then may they justly insult. Here, say they, you discover the right Protestant Temper; you may see in the True Protestant, and the True Reformed, the True Spirit of Contradiction: How upon a Pique to us, they fall out with all *Christendom*; and will leave the Churches of all Ages for our sakes: Let us but use what is Primitive or Orderly, and we may have them as Indecent, Confus'd, and Ridiculous as we please.

For the Truth is, the Principle those men have chose does not only scandalously condemn the Churches of the Second and Third Ages; but is the most inconvenient that could be imagined, and may bring them into as great Absurdities, as they endeavour to avoid. From this Maxime the Church of *Rome* may take its measures; and manage, if they please, the humour of Opposition, as easily as a Vow of Obedience; it is but their taking one side, and our Sectaries are bound to take the other side, they are to be led by Contraries, and out of a Childish crossness will refuse what the other would seem to direct. So may the *Romanist* appropriate to himself all

all Gravity, Decency, and Antiquity: And should he reform, may he not expect that these would quit the Reformation?

This is the direct tendency of the Principle; and this way it goes, though the Papiſt may not think fit to follow it: However we have ſeen what occaſion of Obloquy and Reproach it gives, and what a Diſparagement and Diſreputation it brings on the Cauſe of the Reformation: Shameful to our ſelves, and an Offence to thoſe that otherwiſe might come to us. We may now ſee in the next place, how it operates by the Odium it ſaltens on our Church, and what miſchief it produces there; how convenient and ſerviceable the Scandal is to the Deſigns of *Rome*, if not invented, yet fomented by them, and it ſelf therefore to be eſteemed *Popiſh* for much better reaſon than our Ceremonies have been.

For after the Reformation was, by the Grace of God, once brought about, and the Church of *Rome* could not hinder her Corruptions from being ſeen, and her Uſurpations from being laid open; all that they in their Craft could deviſe, or the Malice of the Devil could have ſuggeſted, was to divide and diſ-unite thoſe that were gone away, and to promote Variance and Diſagreement between us. But the deſign was never more Artificial, than when they were able to raiſe a Jealouſie, that one part of this Reformation was *Popiſh* ſtill; and could make men overlook all the ſubſtantial difference of this Church from that of *Rome*, and conclude them the ſame, only from the common uſe of ſome indiſſerent things. The Church of *England*, they ſound, had manifeſted their Depravations, expoſed them beyond any defence, and raiſed up a fix'd and reſolute Indignation againſt them. This Zeal, as long as it was ſober, rational, & well grounded, they could not poſſibly withſtand: they try therefore whether they cannot divert it upon ſomething elſe, and direct it againſt its own Party; whether they cannot take this Artillery, turn it upon ſomething laudable and innocent, and level it againſt its Friends. Being Hatred to Popery is unavoidable, let the *Engliſh* Church be *Popiſh* too. So are the *Romaniſts* content, if we may come in for a ſhare of the Guilt,

Guilt, that not only part of their Worship, but the whole may be reputed Corrupt: and they are ready to help to accuse themselves in the wrong place, that the charge may fall upon those that are in the right.

And now the *Romish* Emiffaries have accomplished their errand in one fence. If they have not perverted those of our Communion, yet they have seduced others to believe it done: and we are become all *Papists*; at least in the Opinion of the Dissenter. If he may be believed, and we are to be added to the number, the *Roman* Catholicks are vastly increased: And well may they have the Reputation abroad, to be very considerable in their Country; at least well may their Priests report that we are inclinable to return, and easy to be reconciled; when they have the concurring Testimony for it of the Sectary, their seeming Adversary; and this, though but a Mistake and Fame, yet has its effect: it keeps up the hope of the Principals at *Rome*, and redoubles the endeavours of their Seminaries. But they have too a more certain and real aim.

For by this Opinion they may either gain some of us to themselves; or be sure however by the Jealousie to keep us asunder one from another. They may hope that some even of our Communion may at last have a more favourable esteem of the Religion, to which they have been join'd so long by report; and that here, as it happens sometimes in Marriage, we may be content to embrace that Faith to which Fame has said we were contracted before. But to the Honour of our Church be it spoken, this has not been effected neither by the Caresses of one, nor Affronts of the other; neither out of Affection, nor Indignation. So little tendency is there in our Constitution that way, of which we have been unreasonably suspected. Their greater hopes, I suppose, of this kind are upon the Party that pretends to be most averse, and makes at Present the more clamorous and extravagant opposition; for it may be rational to presume, that he that knows not the Reasons nor Intent of the Reformation, and makes nothing of the vast difference between us and *Rome*, may easily therefore step over it, and be as willing to return to them as us; it may be enough to make such a Convert,

to satisfie him in the sign of the Cross, or kneeling at the Communion, as soon as he finds himself Convinc'd of the lawfulness of that Popery, he may be willing to yield to the rest, and may comply as undiscerningly as before he abhorred. Such an Intention as this, we may see, is feasible enough; how far it has been practis'd in Fact, I will not say, or whether the Quakers have not been justly suspected.

For making of Proselytes the *Romanist* cannot have a more proper Method, than to infect the People with Prejudices against us, and to hinder them from settling on the true certain bottom, the Foundation so well laid by the first Reformers, from keeping in that Church which is so sure a place, and may be so easily maintained. However, besides the Converts they gain, by the Jealousies they raise they heighten our Divisions and Animosities, break and scatter us, they hinder us from joyning in what might oppose them, and prevail that we have no common Interest. Nay, things have been sometime brought to that pass, that the Sectarians have rather joyn'd with the Papists themselves, and in publick Counsels confederated with their pretended Enemies to impeach our better Establishment. So much Popish were we then, that the professed *Roman Catholic* was less.

And now by force of this accurs'd Scandal, see into what difficulty the Church is brought: either ingaged in a perpetual intestine quarrel, if she stands as she is, or else obliged to change at the pleasure, and by the direction of her sworn Enemies. If she thinks fit to stand on her own bottom, where so many good and necessary Considerations have fix'd her, and where she has rested so long: she must then expect the continuance of all the Dissenting Out-cries; nay, want of Moderation reproached, and the Schism imputed to her, even by some of her own popular Sons. If she shall be inclinable to comply, where she lawfully may, yet there the humorous Exceptions are so various and so unreasonable, that she sees no good Issue; has no reason to presume that the Faction desires to be content; neither can she tell what Church she shall be at last, if she is to alter still, as often as her Establishments shall be accus'd to correspond with *Rome*.

Now

Now the Church of *Rome*, which has fix'd it self invariably upon the Council of *Trent*, and for the same Reason would have its Adversaries unsettled still, most willingly sees us alter, shift, and change; not only that the uneasiness, inconsistency, and uncertainty may be verified upon us, with which they sometime reproach us; that ours may be still wavering and more easily drawn to them; and that theirs may be unwilling to come to us, into a Body so mutable, and after an whole Age so little satisfied of the Lawfulness of its Rites and Usages; but in hopes too, nay, out of certain prospect, that by such changes we shall be further from settlement than before, and nearer to the Dissolution they would endeavour.

The Demanded Alterations it is plain, are not for the satisfaction of those that are of our Communion; but of those that are not: and by such our own may be scandaliz'd and shaken; but the others will hardly be oblig'd. For when we are ready to change, not mov'd by Arguments and Reason, (for those are most Frivolous and Sophistical) but to comply with Fancy, or gratify Opposition; the Humour it is certain, will be the more hard to satisfy; and obstinacy, when encourag'd, will only learn to ask more: Especially when the Principle, which they move is full of endless dissatisfaction, and has an equal quarrel against the whole Constitution. So that when they have effected one alteration, they have only made way for another; and are never likely to rest, till they have destroyed the whole. Now for Example, the Surplice, the Cross, and kneeling at the Sacrament, are demanded to be releas'd: the particular objections against them are quite out of Countenance, and no longer pressed; only that General one of Popery, or a General Scrupulous Fancy and Humour which they call Conscience, are now urg'd. It is evident then that it is as easy a matter for the same Masters of these Scruples to teach their Auditors, for as worthy Reasons, to be dissatisfied with more: and it is as plain that they have already taught them a general Aversion. Should they be excus'd kneeling at the Sacrament themselves; might it not then be a great Offence to be the Minister, or any other kneeler? As now they pretend an Offence at the Sign of the Cross, tho'

tho' they themselves look only on. Would they not think themselves oblig'd to avoid the very sight, and separate from the Communion of that Popish Practice. Is, think ye, the Consecration Prayer free from all Suspicion? The reverence prescrib'd in handling of the Elements, may come near the Idolatry of the Host; and the whole Service accus'd for the Mass. Is the Cross after Baptisme mention'd by them, because they have forgot their quarrel at God-Fathers; and have a better Opinion of the Office of Confirmation? The Gown may as well be disput'd as the Surplice: Episcopal Orders may be thought a very indifferent thing: and are they content enough with the Rank of Bishops themselves? The whole Form of Prayers has its Faults: and how many are there for no Form at all? So that it is evident those things are rather ask'd to begin, and break ground for further Approaches: there are neither better Reasons, nor is there more Contrariety against them, than against the other parts of our Constitution: Onely these three Circumstantials are most visible, the one upon the Minister, and the other at either of the Sacraments; and so may be signal enough for a Dissenting Triumph, a present Ease to their Scruples, which they will please to accept, in earnest of what is to follow.

Were there any just reason for the Scruple of the meanest person, or inconsiderablest number, God forbid but the Church should give redress. And could it have been presum'd that the Schisme would be heal'd by the removing of those three Ceremonies, however innocent and edifying, they would no doubt have been remitted long ago. But the Governours of the Church know well what the Spirit and Genius of the Dissent is; and to what it drives; upon what Causes it is founded, and the medley of the Persons that are engag'd in it: How small a part the Sincerely Scrupulous make; and how the Harmless are in the hands of the Crafty, and the Weak manag'd by the Sturdy: that the prevailling governing Party are not to be satisfied with a Ceremony or two, but with more substantial Things; Nay that Religion it self is but a Circumstance to their other Designs. This our Superiours know: who want

not the Charity or Condescension that any Reconciler would recommend; but are oblig'd in all holy Prudence, and their Duty to the Church, to take in more considerations, than purchase a private Writer may Comprehend. They are to be as innocent as Doves, but as Wise as the Serpents themselves. But this is beyond design of this Paragraph, the Scope of which is only this. That if things are but indifferently well, to change is always extreme inconvenient, but then most especially when there will be no probable Stop: That the Papists will be as well pleas'd with such alterations as the Dissenter; and neither fully satisfy'd but with our total Abolition.

So is a Change, tho' in things perfectly Indifferent, no Indifferent thing. But all things call'd Indifferent are not of equal Indifference; and particularly the change This Maxime, we are speaking of, would perswade, which the Dissenters endeavour, and our Popish Adversaries wish, is still for the worse. The one pretends to see Popery in our Government and Rituals: the other with grief sees ancient Order, and approv'd Decency retain'd; and the Primitive Church restor'd: They are sensible with what disadvantage they encounter us; that here is no Novelty to reproach; and that the Truly Catholick Church is of our side. They have a Church in their sight, as it were one of the first Ages reviv'd; upbraiding them by its Presence, and discovering the Counterfeit by the Comparison. To disorder and confound this, is the Folly of the one Party, and the Interest of the other: to drive us off from the Ground, on which we stand with so much advantage; to take away from her all Order and Beauty; and to strip her of all the Marks of Antiquity, and Badges of Catholick Agreement. So shall we be that which the Enemies of our Church desire; their Scorn and Mockery first, and afterwards their easie Prey: While having our eyes only upon *Rome*, and running still backwards from her, we fall into the Snare that she has laid behind us.

It were to be wish'd, that those who are so jealous of our Symbolizing with *Rome* in Indifferent things, would be as Cautious in joyning with her in her pernicious Designs,
and

and Conspiring to the Ruine of the Reformation. If they will take their Measures in Opposition to Popery ; let them then close with that Church that is most hated by the Pope ; and come in and help to defend that place, against which he bends his greatest Force. And let them take care, lest, if they know Popery so little now, as to accuse us of it ; they assist not that Religion so long and so effectually, till they bring it in indeed, and learn what it is by a Dear Experiment.

FINIS.
